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PROPOSED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997*

MAJOR PROGRAMME X. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Programme 40. Administrative direction and management

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* The present document contains programme 40 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. The complete medium-term plan will subsequently be issued in final printed form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/45/6/Rev.1).

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PROGRAMME 40. ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTION AND MANAGEMENT

A. Programme

1. General orientation

40.1 The basic mandate for the programme is derived from Article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations, which designates the Secretary-General as the chief administrative officer of the Organization, the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, the Staff Regulations and Rules, the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, and General Assembly resolutions 41/213, 42/211, 43/213 and 44/200 on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations.

40.2 The main objective of the programme is to preserve and enhance the policy coherence of the Organization in the administrative, financial and human resources areas by the provision of unequivocal and clear guidance, direction and central administrative leadership on issues relating to administrative management, internal audit, medium-term planning, programme planning, monitoring, evaluation, budgetary, financing, human resources management, technological innovations policies and general services to the Secretariat, including offices away from Headquarters.

40.3 A smooth-running and effective administrative structure for the Organization as a whole is essential, especially at a time when the Organization's substantive responsibilities have multiplied, and in which its operations have become progressively more complex and geographically dispersed. The role of administration, as one of the "nerve centres" of the Organization, must therefore be supportive of the main objectives of peace, security and economic and social development as set out in the Charter.

40.4 During the 1970s and the first half of 1980s, the Secretariat underwent a rapid growth parallel to its expanding agenda and tasks and in response to demands and requirements of the international community. As a result, the structure of the Secretariat became very complex and even fragmented with numerous different departments, offices and divisions. That pace of growth, however, was not matched by a corresponding expansion in management capacity effective enough to cope with those changes and maintain an overall administrative efficiency.

40.5 In 1987, following the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 41/213 containing its decisions on the recommendations of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations, a major reform was initiated in the area of administration and management with a view to eliminating duplication, strengthening lines of authority, suppressing hierarchical layers, and simplifying financial and administrative procedures. The ultimate aim was to increase efficiency and productivity, achieve cost-effectiveness and ensure the highest standards in the area of administrative services.

40.6 In the area of internal management and financial controls, the expansion in the activities and scope of work of the Organization has in turn warranted increasing audit attention to ensure that resources are being utilized effectively and in the best interest of the Organization. With the growth in the level of

extrabudgetary resources in the programme budget of the United Nations, the General Assembly has expressed concern with regard to the lack of proper control and scrutiny in the receipt, recording and utilization of those funds.

40.7 A coherent administrative structure requires transparency in management and a strong system of internal justice. In recommendation 60 of its report, the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts recognized that the internal justice system was too cumbersome and it urged that the appeals machinery be strengthened without delay and that appropriate measures be undertaken as rapidly as possible. Since 1987, therefore, vigorous steps have been taken to carry out the initial phase of reforming the processes of that system in the Secretariat, with special focus upon the appellate stage. The final phase of the reform will focus on the improvement of informal procedures for the amicable resolution of staff grievances.

40.8 The administration of justice is but one issue calling for a reappraisal of staff-management relations. Effective participation of staff in identifying, examining and resolving all issues relating to staff welfare and maintaining continuous contact and communication between the staff and the administration have become an important management tool in all areas of administration. Since the establishment in 1980 of the Staff-Management Co-ordination Committee, a formal joint staff-management machinery, its terms of reference has been revised and updated. The framework for the conduct of staff-management activities will need to be further reviewed and enhanced, especially in the light of the reform and restructuring that have taken place and may continue to take place in the Secretariat.

40.9 The close link between reforms aiming at a leaner and restructured Secretariat and a vigorous policy of technological innovations has been recognized. In its resolution 44/200 C, the General Assembly, recognizing the importance of technological innovations in relation to the search for efficiency in the Organization, called for a review and assessment of current policies and processes and of the co-ordinating mechanism with other units within the United Nations system, an assessment of the results of cost-benefit analyses, and an outline of future plans and anticipated results for the efficiency of the Organization. Accordingly, current policies and procedures relating to technological innovations will need to be reviewed, and decisions will need to be taken on the direction which the Secretariat intends to take in this area.

2. Overall strategy

40.10 The programme will continue to be implemented by the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management at Headquarters, the functions and organizational structure of which are described in the Secretary-General's Bulletin ST/SGB/Organization, Section P, of March 1976. On behalf of the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management will continue to provide central policy guidance, co-ordination and direction to all offices in the Secretariat, at Headquarters and overseas, on issues pertaining to finance, human resources, general services and technological innovations management in order to promote and enhance the policy coherence of the Organization in those areas. In carrying out these functions, the Under-Secretary-General, as head of the Department of Administration and Management, is assisted by the Assistant Secretaries-General in charge of the

Offices of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance, Human Resources Management, and General Services.

40.11 In the field of internal auditing, the scope of audit coverage will be expanded and auditing techniques adjusted in response to the widened scope of activities of the Organization, such as increased auditing of field offices and of extrabudgetary programmes. In the area of administration of justice, reforms will continue, in particular with regard to improving the informal procedures for amicable settlement of staff grievances to ensure a continuous, just and efficient internal justice system in the Secretariat. With regard to staff-management relations, the machinery at Headquarters and field offices will be constantly reviewed and monitored, and the framework for the conduct of those activities will be clearly defined.

40.12 During the plan period, maximum potential of technological innovations in office automation, computer technology and communications will be ensured, taking duly into account the diverse needs of the departments/offices. Central guidelines and policies will be reviewed, refined and established to adapt to the changing needs of the Organization and to ensure their uniform application at all duty stations of the Secretariat.

40.13 In carrying out those activities, the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management will continue to maintain close and effective co-ordination and co-operation with all other organizational units of the Secretariat, especially with regard to ensuring clear policy direction and coherence in the area of administration and management. The Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management will continue to represent the Secretary-General or ensure his representation when governing bodies, agencies in the common system and administrative advisory bodies consider administration and management matters. In addition, the Office will continue to provide secretariat services to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and to be the focal point at Headquarters for liaison with the Joint Inspection Unit.

3. Subprogramme structure and priorities

40.14 The following four subprogrammes are proposed under this programme:

Subprogramme 1. Internal audit services

Subprogramme 2. Administration of justice

Subprogramme 3. Staff-management relations

Subprogramme 4. Technological innovations policies

40.15 Priority will be given to subprogrammes 3 (Staff-management relations) and 4 (Technological innovations policies).

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B. Subprogrammes

SUBPROGRAMME 1. INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES

(a) Objectives

40.16 The legislative authority for subprogramme 1 derives from the Financial Regulations of the United Nations and the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, and relevant General Assembly resolutions on the financial reports and audited statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors, the most recent of which are resolutions 43/216 of 21 December 1988 and 44/183 of 19 December 1989.

40.17 As the activities and financial transactions of the Organization increase in number and complexity, management and financial controls have to be monitored for their effectiveness in reducing or minimizing the risks of waste, fraud and abuse, and in facilitating the efficient and economical use of resources for the achievement of programme goals as intended by legislative bodies and management. Of special importance is the question of the effectiveness of the existing internal controls, in particular with respect to offices and other operations away from Headquarters. This increase in activities results from a number of events affecting the work of the Organization. The Security Council and the General Assembly have taken decisions that will intensify and expand activities for peace-keeping and peace-making, international drug control and the environment. The economic situation of many countries in the developing regions of the world requires a significant increase in the number and size of technical co-operation projects. Large numbers of refugees continue to need international assistance. Those decisions and events will generate additional United Nations activities all over the world. At the same time, there is a growing concern in the Assembly that the Organization's extrabudgetary resources, which now exceed the regular budget, have not received the same degree of audit attention, particularly as to whether the resources are being utilized efficiently, economically and effectively and for the purpose intended. The designing, development and launching into operation of the new integrated management information system demand correspondingly new auditing competence and skills in ensuring both that effective controls are built in the system and that electronic data processing audits are carried out.

40.18 The subprogramme is aimed at providing management with (a) continuing independent and objective assessments of the performance of regular budgetary and extrabudgetary operations and programmes of the Organization with regard to the accomplishment of established objectives and goals in accordance with the intents of the related legislative authority; reliability and integrity of information; compliance with policies, regulations, plans and procedures; the safeguarding of assets; and economical, efficient and effective use of resources; and (b) timely recommendations for corrective measures.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

40.19 During the plan period, the Internal Audit Division, which has offices in New York, Geneva and Nairobi, will be responsible for the implementation of the subprogramme. It will make reports to management bodies recommending remedial or preventive measures according to the objectives of the subprogramme. The current emphasis on systems-based audits, review of internal controls and performance of

detailed tests of transactions and balances will be extended to include substantially more audits of programme outputs. Toward those ends, additional value-for-money audits will be executed. Based on findings that more incidence of absence or non-implementation of internal controls occurs in the field, thereby resulting in loss of resources, mismanagement and failure to execute activities for the purpose intended, more field audits will be carried out and special attention will be devoted to the institution of preventive measures at the root cause of problems.

40.20 A new way of analysing findings and recommendations will be formulated to help management bodies apply audit feedback for the achievement of efficient programme execution. A more rational deployment of value-for-money audits will relate closely to the emerging pattern of problem areas. Poorly managed activities will receive more audit attention. Such reviews will also focus on the adequacy of rules and procedures and on administrative infrastructure of problem areas with a view to assisting management bodies in developing principles and mechanisms of sound programme administration.

40.21 The Division will continue its effort to ensure that security and audit controls are built into all electronic data-processing systems, including the integrated management information service, and are functioning effectively and that audit trails are preserved. Audit coverage by the offices of the Division in New York, Geneva and Nairobi will be expanded in scope and depth to ensure that financial reporting through the integrated management information service reflects actual transactions.

40.22 To increase the productivity of the auditing staff, the Division's management information system will continue to be upgraded and the integration of its modules will be achieved. A more effective application of electronic data processing to the performance of audits will be identified or developed, and auditors will receive appropriate training in that regard.

40.23 To the extent that extrabudgetary funds are available to finance additional coverage, more peace-keeping and peace-making activities, technical co-operation projects and country programmes for refugees will be audited than was possible during the current plan period. The utility, desirability and feasibility of a new type of comprehensive audit of all United Nations activities at the country level will be studied. Should the conclusion be reached that such an audit could contribute to the assessment of the overall performance of the United Nations programmes and their impact, it could be introduced on an experimental basis during the plan period.

SUBPROGRAMME 2. ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

(a) Objectives

40.24 The legislative authority for subprogramme 2 derives from Articles 100 and 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, General Assembly resolutions 39/245, 40/252, 40/258 B, 41/213, 42/220 B, 43/224 B and 44/185, and staff regulations 10.1, 10.2 and 11.1.

40.25 With the diverse political and cultural background of the staff, the maintenance of its efficiency and morale is particularly dependent on the transparency of procedures and equality of treatment. The Staff Regulations and

Rules, which regulate decision-making and the contractual situation, obligations and entitlements of international civil servants, are rather complex in nature. Furthermore, the jurisdictional immunity of the Organization legally obligates it to have just and effective internal processes. An effective system for the administration of justice is therefore not only necessary, it is also an indispensable aid to staff-management relations and to the upgrading management practices.

40.26 The objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) To ensure and facilitate the functioning of an effective internal justice system in the Secretariat;

(b) To advise the Secretary-General on the final decision on any appeal by staff members against an administrative decision or against disciplinary action;

(c) To provide legal advice and/or administrative support services to the bodies designated for recourse and disciplinary matters: Joint Appeals Boards, Joint Disciplinary Committees, Grievance Panels and Panels of Counsel;

(d) To examine and resolve allegations of discriminatory treatment and other staff grievances by amicable settlement;

(e) To provide administrative machinery to the Panels of Counsel in advising and representing staff members before the bodies designated for recourse and disciplinary matters.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

40.27 Following promulgation of a fully revised set of disciplinary rules, effective 1 January 1990, internal rules of procedure for Joint Disciplinary Committees will be developed and adopted by each Committee, consistent with the Staff Regulations and Rules, relevant administrative issuances and the requirements of due process. At the same time, the implementation of the revised disciplinary rules will be monitored to assess their effectiveness in the light of practical experience.

40.28 The functioning of the Joint Appeals Boards and Joint Disciplinary Committees will be monitored to ensure that appeals and disciplinary matters are effectively dealt with and to prevent recurrence of a backlog.

40.29 In spite of past efforts to strengthen the discrimination and grievance panels, established under administration instructions ST/AI/245 and ST/AI/308/Rev.1, they have not functioned as intended in many instances. Consideration will be given to the question of whether their procedures can be revised so as to provide objective and useful means of informal dispute settlement or whether some other means, such as mandatory conciliation or some form of ombudsman system, should replace them.

40.30 Assistance will continue to be provided to staff members on appeals and disciplinary matters through the Panels of Counsel. The role of the co-ordinator, who is entrusted with the task of setting up and assisting such panels, will be expanded to include providing advice to staff and pursuing informal settlements, thereby reducing unnecessary appeals.

40.31 In addition, the following continuing activities will be carried out:

(a) Provision of secretarial and other services to the Joint Appeals Boards, the Joint Disciplinary Committees, the Panels on Discrimination and other Grievances and the Panel of Counsel;

(b) Provision of legal advice to the Secretary-General on the disposition of appeals, staff grievances and disciplinary matters;

(c) Monitoring the implementation of the Secretary-General's final decisions on appeals, disciplinary cases and judgements of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal;

(d) Monitoring and ensuring the speedy and effective functioning of the internal justice system in the Secretariat;

(e) Improvements and periodic review of the rules and machinery on the administration of justice.

SUBPROGRAMME 3. STAFF-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

(a) Objectives

40.32 The legislative authority for subprogramme 3 derives from staff regulations 8.1 and 8.2.

40.33 Within the framework of the Staff Regulations and Rules, the requirements for dealing with issues concerning staff-management relations have evolved over the years but not all of them have been explicitly defined. Furthermore, some of the developments in this area have not yet been reflected in the relevant staff rules.

40.34 The main objective of the subprogramme is to ensure and facilitate the effective functioning of the machinery for dealing with staff-management relations.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

40.35 During the plan period, texts regulating staff-management relations will be consolidated so as to define clearly the framework for the conduct of staff-management activities. Joint staff-management machinery at both the local and Secretariat-wide levels will be closely monitored so as to ensure that staff-management issues are adequately handled and that staff participation in questions relating to their welfare is effective. Information activities will also be undertaken to foster a better understanding of staff-management relations.

40.36 In addition, secretarial and other support services will be provided to the Joint Advisory Committee and the Staff-Management Co-ordination Committee, and the framework for the conduct of staff-management relations will be kept under review.

SUBPROGRAMME 4. TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS POLICIES

(a) Objectives

40.37 The legislative authority for subprogramme 4 derives from the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/219 of 4 June 1986, by which the Technological Innovations Board was established; General Assembly resolution 43/217 of 21 December 1988, by which the Assembly approved the implementation of phase I of the integrated management information system project, and resolution 44/200 C on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations and, in particular, on the importance of technological innovations in relation to the search for efficiency in the Organization.

40.38 The main objective of the subprogramme is to develop and co-ordinate the establishment of policies and procedures related to the introduction of technological innovations at all duty stations of the Secretariat and to ensure adherence to standards and compatibility of technology among duty stations.

40.39 During the mid-1980s, particularly since 1987, various organizational units at Headquarters and at other duty stations have taken initiatives to proceed with technological developments to address pressing needs. The installation of equipment and software, mostly to support office automation, has taken place on a large scale and the elaboration of a Secretariat-wide strategy of guidelines or standards has not kept pace with this development. A similar situation applies in the area of telecommunications where considerable technological advances have occurred.

40.40 Insufficient co-ordination in this area has, in some instances, resulted in disparate and often incompatible technologies. Furthermore, in a number of cases, the necessary infrastructure to support those activities was not in place and incompatibilities both within and among duty stations have also resulted. Those problems have been exacerbated by a shortage of key technical personnel in many areas.

40.41 The advent of improved telecommunications and the requirements for fast and simple electronic voice exchange among all duty stations have created the need to harmonize existing technologies and to prevent future incompatibilities. This harmonization represents a major investment for the United Nations.

40.42 A major effort towards a comprehensive and integrated approach was taken in the area of administrative systems with the proposal for an integrated management information systems in 1987, the first phase of which was approved by the General Assembly in section XII of its resolution 43/217. That initiative was a significant step towards the electronic integration of offices performing administrative tasks regardless of location. Implementation of the project will be broken down in phases: phase one involves designing and implementing modules that provide a functional core for the system and modules that provide bridges with existing systems; and in phase two, modules whose existence and utility are contingent upon the design and implementation of the modules built in the first phase will be added. It is anticipated that phases one and two will be implemented during the period of the plan.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

40.43 The mandate of the Technological Innovations Board, which is to promulgate policies, standards and procedures relating to the acquisition and use of office automation equipment, will be expanded to deal also with the broader area of technological innovations. That includes all aspects of office automation, as represented by software and hardware related to microcomputers and minicomputers, and all aspects of mainframe computer applications and operations, and local and global telecommunications. While the primary responsibility for initiating and implementing policies and procedures dealing with those matters at Headquarters has been given to the Electronic Services Division of the Office of General Services, Department of Administration and Management, that Division also plays an advisory role vis-à-vis the Technological Innovations Board and other offices.

40.44 The initiatives taken earlier will be reviewed, modified in the light of experience and confirmed. The co-ordination among duty stations will take added importance in the light of the increasing need for rapid exchange of information among information systems. The integrated management information system project will also demand an integrated approach in the area of communications. Techniques for integrating mainframe computers, minicomputers and microcomputers into one fully functioning network that takes the user from desktop application to other computers strategically located throughout the United Nations system. A strategic plan will be established, which will lead to the development, co-ordination and monitoring of policies, strategies and standards on an Organization-wide basis.

40.45 During the plan period, the first phase of the project will be completed, that is, the design of programmes for the new system and phased conversion from the old computerized system to the new system. This system will require that improved communications be in place. At the same time, new systems will have been introduced at Headquarters and at all major duty stations, facilitating the flow of information between duty stations and ensuring that managers perform their functions on the basis of up-to-date and accurate information. Based on the experience gained during that first phase, proposals will be made to enter into the second phase, that is, the computerization, under the modern data-base system adopted for the integrated management information system, of those important administrative processes which could not be included at the initial stage.

40.46 Another relevant development in the context of technological innovations in the Secretariat is the establishment of an optical disc system for storage and retrieval of documentation, approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/201 of 21 December 1989. That system should permit the storage, retrieval and electronic transmission of text for display on a monitor or for printing at all United Nations locations. Its implementation, begun in the current biennium, will continue during the plan period and it is anticipated that on the basis of the experience gained in the introduction of the technology in the area of conference and library services, applications may be extended in a phased manner to other areas of common services such as human resources management, general services and public information at all duty stations.

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PROPOSED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997*

PROGRAMME X. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Programme 41. Human resources management

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PROGRAMME 41. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

A. Programme

1. General orientation

41.1 The general mandate for the present programme derives from Articles 8, 100 and 101 of the Charter of the United Nations and the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations established by the General Assembly. It derives also from a series of subsequent resolutions adopted annually by the Assembly on personnel questions and on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations; the most recent being Assembly resolutions 44/185 of 19 December 1989 and 44/200 of 21 December 1989, respectively.

41.2 The main objective of the programme is to plan, attract, develop and retain a cohesive and productive work force that the United Nations Secretariat requires in order to discharge its responsibilities under the Charter.

41.3 During the last decade, the gradual expansion in size of the Organization and the widening of its scope of work has created the need for a new approach to personnel management, whereby the emphasis has to be shifted from a policy of personnel management to the development of a dynamic human resources management plan and policies. Following the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, containing its decisions on the recommendations of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations, contained in its report, the management of human resources has become a critical activity in the Organization, especially in the light of the restructuring of the Secretariat and the post-reduction exercise.

41.4 A major personnel policy reform was initiated consolidating all recruitment and placement activities, so that future human resources needs could be forecast more accurately and those activities planned more effectively. At the same time, activities related to compensation and classification were combined so that greater control could be exercised over the administration of allowances and benefits and the development of job classification standards. A dynamic training programme, geared to the changing needs of the Organization, was launched with a view to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the staff. With the need for improved management skills, career development prospects and the increased usage of computer processing and office automation, those training programmes have been of particular importance. Finally, activities related to medical services and employee assistance were also brought under one common management direction.

41.5 Rapid shifts in international structures, relationships and policies have created internal challenges for the Organization and are likely to place increasing demands upon the staff, which must be able to deal effectively with the whole range of global problems that the legislative organs are likely to assign to the Secretariat. In the context of the additional responsibilities that are being entrusted to the Organization, the Secretary-General is, inter alia, called upon to provide the machinery and human resources for large-scale field operations (peace-keeping and peace-making missions) of growing scope and complexity. It is expected that that trend will extend through the period 1992-1997 of the medium-term plan.

41.6 In the face of those challenges, the ability of the Organization to forecast needs and respond more effectively in the field of human resources management still needs to be improved. In the area of recruitment and placement, the conceptualization and formulation of long-term policies will be addressed. In particular, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/185, a major effort to increase the mobility of staff will be undertaken. In order to ensure a vigorous Secretariat, the Organization will need to continue to recruit new staff members, especially at the junior Professional levels, through the application of competitive examinations. Another major area of concern will be the advancement of the status of women in the Secretariat, as mandated by the General Assembly in a series of resolutions that clearly assign high priority to that policy, in particular, Assembly resolutions 43/224 C of 27 December 1988 and 44/185 C of 19 December 1989, which reaffirmed the goal of placing women in 30 per cent of the Professional posts subject to geographical distribution by the end of 1990 and also called for women to occupy a greater number of higher level and decision-making posts.

41.7 In order to attract and retain staff of the highest calibre, as required by the Charter, a strong compensation system and remuneration package has to be put into place. In section I of its resolution 44/198 of 21 December 1989, the General Assembly approved most of the proposals presented in the report of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) on the conditions of service of the staff in the Professional and higher categories. The new compensation system can be seen as a step towards re-establishing the competitiveness of the conditions of service of staff in those categories, in particular for staff serving in the field, a prerequisite for maintaining a geographically balanced international civil service with the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity and for enhancing the motivation and productivity of the staff.

41.8 A coherent administrative system, providing transparency in management and safeguards against insecurity and unfair treatment, has to be in place. It requires the continuous elaboration and interpretation of the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and the issuance of subordinate legal provisions; the monitoring of their consistent application and the resolution of disputes. With an improved overall system of administration of justice during the last few years, the backlog, which had clogged the appeals system, has been eliminated and the percentage of cases going to appeal has been reduced by resolving many cases at the stage of administrative review. The next step will be to improve the quality and speed of decision-making in disputes and to obviate problems by taking anticipatory action.

41.9 In order to improve the capacity of the Organization and its staff for current and future tasks, it is essential to develop more effective and comprehensive training policies and integrate them into a human resources plan that will be truly responsive to programmatic goals and sensitive to the issues of staff development and morale.

41.10 To ensure that the staff members of the Organization are fit to carry out their duties, regular medical examinations will need to be maintained. Owing to the unprecedented increase in mission assignments, a backlog has been created with regard to those regular examinations. Health-enhancing and disease preventive programmes should be increased. At the same time, activities related to employee assistance will have to be strengthened in order to address the increasing need to provide guidance and counselling to staff.

2. Overall strategy

41.11 The programme will continue to be implemented by the Office of Human Resources Management at Headquarters, and by the various personnel services of the Divisions of Administration at the United Nations Office at Geneva and Vienna, the regional commissions, and other United Nations offices away from Headquarters. The functions and organizational structure of the Office of Human Resources Management are described in the Secretary-General's Bulletins (ST/SGB/Organization, sect. P (II) of June 1975 and ST/SGB/224 of 13 February 1987). The Office of Human Resources Management at Headquarters will continue to develop policies and provide overall guidance to overseas offices.

41.12 In the decade ahead, amidst rapid shifts in international relations, the context in which the Organization will operate is one of change and reorientation. The focus of the programme on human resources management will accordingly move from technical servicing to active support for the changing substantive functions of the Organization under the Charter.

41.13 Under the direct supervision of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, planning and information activities will be centralized to ensure that the short-term and long-term staffing needs can be forecast and met adequately and that the human resources of the Organization are utilized optimally.

41.14 In the last three years, the resources of the programme in the field of recruitment and placement have been fully committed to the implementation of the vacancy management and staff redeployment plan as an initial module leading to a comprehensive career development plan, the retrenchment plan and the staffing of peace-keeping operations and peace-keeping missions. During the period 1992-1997 of the medium-term plan, ways and means will be explored for maintaining all Member States within their desirable ranges in posts subject to geographical distribution. Wider and more aggressive campaigns to identify recruitment sources and qualified candidates, especially female candidates, will be undertaken. At the same time, a comprehensive and orderly career development system for staff in all categories will be completed and implemented. In order to strengthen further mobility, which has noticeably increased under the vacancy management system, a planned and centralized scheme to rotate staff in the Professional category will become an integral part of human resources management.

41.15 The principle of career appointments has now been more widely accepted by most Member Governments, which helps in enhancing the cohesiveness and mobility of the staff. It is the intention of the Office of Human Resources Management to foster that trend during the medium-term plan period. In that context, competitive examinations will be used more extensively to recruit new staff members at the junior Professional level and the application of competitive examinations will be extended selectively during 1992-1997 to posts at the P-3 level.

41.16 In a rapidly changing work environment, career counselling becomes critical and will be strengthened for staff in both the Professional and General Service categories. In meeting that goal, a "Career Development Handbook" for staff in the General Service category at Headquarters has been prepared by the Office of Human Resources Management, introducing the concept of career paths based on the concept of occupational groups. It is envisaged that a handbook for staff in the Professional category will also be prepared, based on similar concepts. Guidance to overseas offices on career counselling will be provided by Headquarters.

41.17 To achieve the 30 per cent goal of women in Professional posts subject to geographical distribution mandated by the General Assembly, a number of special emergency measures have been instituted. Those include earmarking at least 50 per cent of vacancies for women, collaborating with departments in identifying women candidates for recruitment and promotion, and developing additional sources of recruitment both from Member States and from academic and professional women's organizations. A system of ongoing consultations with Member States has been put in place, since the success of those measures will require their increased support. It is anticipated that similar measures will continue to be applied through the medium-term plan period.

41.18 ICSC has been urged by the General Assembly to complete its review of the remuneration package in 1990, and in conjunction with the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board, to complete a comprehensive review of pensions and pensionable remuneration. It is expected that, based on that review, a broad series of changes in the conditions of service of staff will be made, which will eventually bring into being a stronger and more effective Secretariat.

41.19 In the area of the administration of justice, a computerized compendium of administrative tribunal jurisprudence and legal precedents will be developed to serve both as training resources and as a reference guide for managers and joint bodies. Ensuring consistency of treatment at different duty stations and providing adequate protection to the staff will continue to be primary objectives.

41.20 Since 1987, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213 on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations, a number of departments and offices in the political and common services areas have undergone restructuring with a view to increasing their efficiency and eliminating duplication in work programmes. It is expected that similar restructuring will take place in other areas of the Secretariat during the period of the medium-term plan. Early and active involvement of classification specialists in such areas as job and organizational design can contribute significantly towards the goal of optimum resource utilization. In that context, the job classification component of the present programme will be fully co-ordinated with the processes of programme budgeting and organizational analysis as an effective management tool.

41.21 In the light of the current political development in the world, the staff will be taking on more frequent mission assignments. To ensure that it can measure up to the challenges of relevance and competence, training will continue to be emphasized. Within the parameters of curtailed human resources, it will be even more necessary to upgrade and develop leadership abilities and management skills. Training and retraining will also be needed on an expanded scale to enable staff to master and use the sophisticated and rapidly evolving new offices technologies as they become available.

41.22 To maintain a productive staff with good health and high morale, the area of medical administration will undergo constant review and improvements. Attention to employee assistance will be increased to ensure that adequate assistance can be provided in the area of staff welfare and counselling.

41.23 The work of the Office of Human Resources Management involves every staff member and requires close co-ordination with every programme manager in every department and office that has direct responsibility to the Secretary-General. The

application of the Staff Regulations and Rules is co-ordinated with the personnel services of each of the subsidiary organs of the General Assembly, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, that have a separate power to appoint their staff. The policies of the Organization in matters of human resources management are co-ordinated with the directors of personnel of the agencies that have entered into a special relationship with the United Nations, in particular, those that have subscribed to the Statute of ICSU, with which the Office of Human Resources Management, on behalf of the Secretary-General, works very closely in the exercise of the mandate of the Commission.

3. Subprogramme structure and priorities

41.24 On the basis of the above orientation and strategy, four subprogrammes are proposed under the programme, as follows:

Subprogramme 1. Policy planning and analysis

Subprogramme 2. Recruitment, placement and career development

Subprogramme 3. Staff administration and training

Subprogramme 4. Medical and employee assistance

41.25 Priority will be given to activities under subprogramme 2 (Recruitment, placement and career development) and subprogramme 3 (Staff administration and training).

B. Subprogrammes

SUBPROGRAMME 1. POLICY PLANNING AND ANALYSIS

(a) Objectives

41.26 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from Articles 8, 100 and 101 of the Charter of the United Nations; General Assembly resolutions 33/143, 35/210, 43/224 and 44/185; the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/224; and the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

41.27 The absence of a comprehensive, up-to-date management information system has hampered the drawing up of a complete inventory of human resources. The lack of such information has in turn had a negative effect on the process of human resources planning, review and analysis of personnel policies and procedures.

41.28 The objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) To develop a long-term human resource planning strategy of the Organization, so that short-term as well as long-term staffing needs could be forecast and met;

(b) To centralize the formulation, analysis and review of United Nations personnel policies, practices and procedures and develop guidelines and methods to monitor the effective implementation of those policies and procedures;

(c) To maintain an up-to-date and comprehensive data base of an inventory of human resources of the Organization.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

41.29 In implementing the subprogramme, planning and information functions will be integrated. In that connection, accurate data on human resources will be reviewed, compiled, centralized and maintained as a comprehensive computerized human resources management information system. A precise knowledge of human resources currently available will provide a sound basis for projections of future staff needs. With the introduction of new and sophisticated technology, multiple access to personnel records will be provided with due regard to the need for confidentiality. At the same time, substantial efforts will be devoted to monitoring the consistent application of personnel policies and practices and to translating conclusions drawn from the process into guidelines.

SUBPROGRAMME 2. RECRUITMENT, PLACEMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

(a) Objectives

41.30 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from Articles 8, 100 and 101 of the Charter of the United Nations; General Assembly resolutions 33/143, 35/210, 41/213, 42/62, 42/220, 43/224 and 44/185; and the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, in particular articles I and IV, regulations 1.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.5.

41.31 One of the main problems with regard to recruitment and placement of staff is the absence of an up-to-date information system that would permit the timely identification of all present and foreseeable vacancies and their matching of candidates with skills that fill the requirements for the posts in question. A further challenge is that it has to be achieved within the framework of the directives of the General Assembly, establishing priorities and objectives in specific areas.

41.32 With respect to the career development of staff, the difference in living conditions between different duty stations of the Organization has made job rotation difficult. There is therefore a need to encourage staff serving at attractive duty stations to take up assignments at the more difficult duty stations.

41.33 The continuing objective of the subprogramme is to secure the services of those who are best able to perform the tasks required for the successful implementation of the Organization's programme, and to ensure that each staff member has a satisfying career that would provide the maximum impetus to the work of the Organization. For the medium-term plan period, the specific objectives are as follows:

(a) To integrate fully the recruitment, placement, promotion and career development policies with other human resources management policies and activities;

(b) To bring the representation of all Member States in the Secretariat within their desirable ranges for posts in the Professional category and above, subject to geographical distribution;

(c) To increase the percentage of women in the Professional category and above in posts subject to geographical distribution by at least 1 per cent each year beyond the target of 30 per cent for 1990, bringing the percentage to 37 per cent by the end of the medium-term plan period;

(d) To develop and maintain a methodology for identifying the present and future human resources needs of the Organization and for accurately forecasting vacancies for the timely identification and selection of the best possible candidates for posts, in order to ensure the efficient delivery of programmes mandated by the General Assembly;

(e) To prepare and administer appropriate competitive examinations in order to select the best qualified candidates for internal assignment and promotion or outside recruitment to fill posts at various levels in the Professional and General Services categories;

(f) To extend the system of competitive examinations to the P-3 level and to introduce appropriate tests of the linguistic capability of the staff at higher levels;

(g) To develop and implement a comprehensive career development system for all staff and a more systematic approach to the placement and rotation of staff, taking into account the needs of the Organization and its staff, including the implementation of the staff mobility and rotation plan that is scheduled for completion in 1991.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

41.34 Since December 1986, the major tool in the recruitment and placement of staff has been the vacancy management and staff redeployment plan, which had been centralized at Headquarters up to the end of 1989. It was then decided to decentralize the recruitment and placement process as far as possible. Beginning in 1990, the Appointment and Promotion Committee at Headquarters, as well as the committees in each of the regional commissions and in the United Nations offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi will be dealing with cases concerning the selection of internal candidates at the P-1/P-2 to P-4 levels. That procedure will ensure that decisions on filling posts at those levels in the Professional category will be determined primarily at the duty station at which the work is to be done by the candidates selected and that the time taken to fill a post will consequently be reduced. At the same time, procedures instituted at Headquarters with respect to recruitment and placement will be followed by all overseas offices.

41.35 During the medium-term plan period, long-term recruitment policies will be established and further action towards the integration of recruitment policies within the overall human resources management planning will be undertaken in order to ensure that shortages in particular occupations can be anticipated and addressed before they occur. Support activities will be enhanced, such as further developing, refining and maintaining the Roster of Internal Candidates for the Professional and higher categories, as well as developing similar rosters for General Service and related categories at Headquarters, for consultants, and for

service with peace-keeping and peace-making missions. Those rosters will also ensure that staff rotation, which is a conscious scheme to develop all-around staff members, is implemented in a rational and systematic fashion. Improvements to the recruitment system will be made by the provision of more complete and timely information on all vacancies and by integrating that system with a system for the projection of vacancies. Through the establishment of clear guidelines and a consistent application of policies, a shortening of recruitment time should be achieved.

41.36 With regard to career development, rotation and mobility plans will be developed to ensure that all staff have a varied career and acquire a broad experience in their assignments. A mobile and versatile staff, willing and able to assume new and different functions, will be critical to the success of the Organization. Work on the development, integration and implementation of a comprehensive career development system will continue. It will include the grouping of all posts by occupation, the mapping of clearly defined career paths within occupational groups, improvement and co-ordination of computerized information systems to ensure the availability of full information on staffing tables and provisions for mobility and rotation, dissemination of information on all career opportunities, career counselling to staff members at Headquarters and provision of expert guidance on career counselling to staff in overseas duty stations. Qualified candidates from the Roster of Internal Candidates will be identified and presented to departments and offices for consideration as vacancies occur. The selection process will be constantly monitored. The vacancy management system will be refined and made more responsive to the needs of the Organization.

41.37 During the medium-term plan period, the examination system will be further reformed in consultation with departments and offices; the number of Member States where national competitive examinations for Professional posts are held each year will be expanded selectively and competitive examinations will be held for recruitment of external candidates at the P-3 level. It is also planned to integrate fully the competitive examinations for language posts and posts subject to geographical distribution, all of which are open to staff members who are eligible in the framework of a comprehensive career development system.

SUBPROGRAMME 3. STAFF ADMINISTRATION AND TRAINING

(a) Objectives

41.38 The legislative authority of the subprogramme derives from Articles 8, 100 and 101 of the Charter of the United Nations; General Assembly resolutions 2485 (XXIII), 33/143, 41/209, 42/220, 43/224, 44/185 and 44/198; articles II, III, V, VII-XII of the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations; and the Regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund.

41.39 The introduction of a "Personnel Manual" in late 1987 has facilitated the monitoring of the application of personnel norms, and progress has been made in the past few years in ensuring a clearer understanding of the universal application of personnel policies throughout the Secretariat. However, this progress has been hampered by a combination of factors, including staff retrenchment, a sudden increase in mission assignments and delays in the computerization of personnel files and processes. As a result, there remains a certain lack of transparency in administrative procedures that has led to an increase in cases of appeals.

41.40 After the clearing of the backlog of cases before the Joint Appeals Board, the more expeditious handling of appeals, together with the trend in the Administrative Tribunal to grant sizeable compensation in an increasing number of cases, have led to a substantial rise in the number of administrative decisions challenged. At the same time, tightened monitoring and audit procedures have led to a massive increase in disciplinary cases.

41.41 In the area of compensation, increased co-ordination activities with other United Nations agencies require closer links within the United Nations Common System, as well as between Headquarters and field duty stations. To improve the timeliness and accuracy of data input, the process of salary data collection must be computerized. On the substantive issues, further refinements of the salary survey methodology of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ) are needed in determining the various benefits and ensuring consistent application of agreed compensation policies and methodologies.

41.42 With respect to the classification system, there is a need to co-ordinate decisions with the programming and budgetary process in order to ensure full consistency between classification actions, on the one hand, and of programme objectives and the Secretariat's organizational structure, on the other hand.

41.43 The importance of training has been fully recognized over the past few years. However, to make it an integral part of human resources management, a more systematic analysis of the skills needed to carry out present and future mandates of the Organization is required.

41.44 The development of new technologies and the increasingly diversified mandates of the Organization have created new demands and led to gaps in staff skills and knowledge. Those gaps are evident in computer technology, management and supervision and in some of the major substantive areas of the Organization's work. In the area of language training, the requirements of the Organization in terms of human resources management or skills needed for specific jobs are not sufficiently taken into account. In the face of those needs, moreover, there is an uneven access to training opportunities throughout the Secretariat, a particular problem at duty stations away from Headquarters.

41.45 Finally, training results have not been evaluated in a systematic way so as to demonstrate clearly the links between training and the achievement of organizational goals. Without such an evaluation, the Organization is unable to evaluate whether the funds it does expend meet the objectives it has set for that function.

41.46 The specific objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) To develop and implement personnel administration policies that would ensure a sound and coherent personnel administration throughout the Secretariat;

(b) To provide the official text and authoritative interpretation of the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and other normative issuances, in order to achieve consistency and transparency;

(c) To implement policies relating to salaries, allowances and other entitlements consistently throughout the Organization, including its field missions, on the basis of the decisions of the General Assembly and of the

activities of ICSC, the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board, the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, CCAQ and other intergovernmental and inter-agency bodies;

(d) To implement approved classification standards for the Professional, Field Service and the General Service and related categories, to participate in the development of classification standards, and to pursue actively the integration of the classification system within the overall management process;

(e) To provide a speedy, effective and fair mechanism for the resolution of disputes between staff members and the Organization, as well as a disciplinary machinery that ensures full due process for the staff, while safeguarding standards of integrity and conduct required by the Charter;

(f) To develop and implement core training programmes that would ensure a common foundation of skills throughout the Secretariat in priority areas; to maintain and enhance the linguistic capability of all United Nations staff; to develop a programme that, by the end of the medium-term plan period, would have provided the opportunity for upgrading and developing the professional knowledge and skills of at least 30 per cent of the staff in Professional posts with a minimum of five years' seniority in the Organization; to make training opportunities more equitably available to all staff regardless of duty station; to work towards the establishment of an institutionalized role for training in human resources planning, management and development; and, finally, to increase staff training and development opportunities Secretariat-wide through inter-agency co-operation.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

41.47 In the staff administration area, staff services and other support activities will continue to be provided within the framework of the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and other pertinent administrative issuances. Wider use of modern techniques and equipment will improve the servicing of activities such as the administration of dependency allowances, the education grant and related travel expenses, rental subsidy and the maintenance of personnel records. A closer monitoring of the consistent application of personnel policies throughout the Secretariat will be achieved through consultations and a greater rotation of personnel officers between Headquarters and other offices. Periodic updates of the "Personnel Manual" will be issued in order to facilitate the monitoring and application of administrative norms.

41.48 In the area of administrative reviews, appeals and disciplinary matters, delays and inconsistencies in decision-making will be reduced by providing both staff and managers with accessible legal information in the form of a computerized compendium of relevant jurisprudence and interpretations. Contested decisions will continue to be reviewed, and legal advice, fact-finding and analysis will be provided.

41.49 In the area of compensation, improvements in communication data processing should make it possible to create an integrated network linking all United Nations agencies and all duty stations. Local salary survey methodology will be reviewed and streamlined.

41.50 Special attention will be paid during the medium-term plan period to the integration of classification with other human and financial resources management systems, the implementation of classification standards for posts in the General Service and related categories at all duty stations and the review of existing classification structures.

41.51 With regard to training and staff development, based on the fact-finding missions that will have been carried out by the end of 1991 in order to assess training needs and improve co-ordination of training system-wide, a more extensive programme of externally and internally supported studies will be developed to upgrade and develop the professional knowledge and skills of the staff in substantive areas. The following programmes will continue: sabbatical leave and external studies; training for supervisors, computer and related technical training, management training, induction and orientation programme, language training, drafting workshops and basic skills training for secretarial and clerical staff. A Secretariat-wide basic training for mission assignment will also be developed.

41.52 During the medium-term plan period, in order to make training opportunities more equitably available throughout the Secretariat, the organizational structures necessary to carry out and support a training function will be put into place at all major duty stations. Regular budget funds, voluntary contributions and other financial support will be sought for that purpose. Inter-agency co-operation will be explored more systematically to expand further those training opportunities.

41.53 The objective of achieving an integrated, institutionalized role for training in human resources planning and other aspects of human resources management will be enhanced by the development of a Secretariat-wide training information system linked to the integrated management information system and benefiting from its resources. A system will also be developed to evaluate the results of training in order to establish the links between training and the achievement of organizational objectives. Efforts will be made to involve managers systematically in the training of their staff and to increase their awareness of the need to integrate staff training and development into programme goals and strategies.

SUBPROGRAMME 4. MEDICAL AND EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

(a) Objectives

41.54 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from Staff Regulations of the United Nations 4.6 and 6.2, and the Staff Rules.

41.55 The number of physical examinations and nursing procedures done has increased substantially, especially during the biennium 1988-1989, owing mainly to the unexpected number of mission assignments that required medical clearances. A backlog of routine and/or voluntary medical examinations has thus been created. In the area of employee assistance, the major challenge will be to maintain the trust of the staff so that they seek in-house consultations promptly before serious problems become unmanageable. There is also an urgent need to establish a strong employee assistance programme to deal with health and performance deterioration because of alcohol and/or substance abuse. It has also been recognized that some field offices do not offer counselling services to staff.

41.56 The specific objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) To ensure that staff members of the United Nations, UNDP and UNICEF are fit to carry out their duties to achieve the goals of those organizations;

(b) To continue to promote and maintain the health of the staff through regular medical examinations, consultations and appropriate laboratory and radiologic investigations, which will become more crucial than in the past as the Organization becomes more involved in large-scale field operations;

(c) To develop and improve health-enhancing programmes in such areas as weight control, substance abuse, stress management, physical activity and in the area of occupational medicine;

(d) To continue to improve staff welfare, staff morale and productivity and to provide adequate counselling services to staff.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

41.57 During the medium-term plan period, medical standards and policies will continue to be reviewed and used as guidelines for the medical services of the entire United Nations system. The implementation of rules and regulations will be constantly monitored to promote the welfare of the staff and meet the needs of the Organization.

41.58 Health promotion programmes will be organized and implemented in order to maintain the health of staff members, for example by vision screening, pulmonary function tests, blood pressure screening, health education, weight reduction, smoking cessation and stress reduction.

41.59 In order to respond efficiently to the rapid changes of health situations world wide, special immunization programmes, such as the Hepatitis B vaccine and meningococcal, will be instituted. New technology will be utilized through the acquisition of modern laboratory and medical equipment.

41.60 Substantial efforts will be made to prevent occupational health and safety hazards in areas such as air quality, temperature, toxic exposure, noise and lighting. Training of medical staff through the external studies programme will be increased, in order to update the staff with knowledge concerning emerging trends in medicine.

41.61 To improve efficiency in medical administration, a computerized health management system, scheduled to be established by 1991, will be maintained and updated. That system will expedite the administrative process for medical clearances, procurement and inventory of medical supplies and equipment and epidemiological statistics.

41.62 Policies and procedures will be established to provide an expanded employee assistance programme with a full range of in-house and well-established outside services for Headquarters and all major duty stations. Every effort will be made to ensure that the increasing volume and complexity of employee assistance needs will be well addressed. Guidance to staff in areas such as housing, schooling, after-school activities, cultural and educational events will continue to be given.

41.63 To ensure the viability of the assistance procedures for alcohol and/or substance abuse, a joint staff-management approach will continue to be taken, with the help of recovering staff members. Information/training programmes will be prepared and implemented.

41.64 Finally, discussions will continue with other organizations in the United Nations Common System, focusing on means of improving services by increasing inter-agency co-ordination.

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PROPOSED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997*

MAJOR PROGRAMME X. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Programme 42. Programme planning, budget and finance

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* The present document contains programme 42 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. The complete medium-term plan will subsequently be issued in final printed form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/45/6/Rev.1).

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A. Programme

1. General orientation

42.1 The legislative authority for this programme derives from Article 17 of the Charter of the United Nations and, more specifically from the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.

42.2 Since the adoption of resolution 3043 (XXVII) of 19 December 1972, by which the General Assembly approved the new form of presentation of the United Nations budget as a "useful basis for proceeding towards the introduction of a system of programme budgeting in the United Nations", the Assembly has adopted numerous resolutions that have elaborated further on the establishment and implementation of an integrated programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation system in the Organization. Among the most notable are the following: resolutions 37/234 of 21 December 1982, 38/227 of 20 December 1983 and 43/219 of 21 December 1988 on programme planning; 41/213 of 19 December 1986 on the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations, which contained measures for improving the planning, programming and budgeting process of the Organization and set forth a new budget process, and 42/211 of 21 December 1987 on the implementation of its resolution 41/213, in which it approved guidelines for the contingency fund.

42.3 The programme has continuously evolved over the recent years in order to respond better to the perceived need expressed in those resolutions for more coherence in the programmes of work of the United Nations and for sound management of its limited resources. In 1987, following the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 41/213 containing its decisions on the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations, activities relating to programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation have been brought together under a coherent structure.

42.4 One of the central objectives of the programme will continue to be the implementation, and the adaptation to changing circumstances, of an integrated system of programme planning, budget, monitoring and evaluation so as to ensure that the activities of the United Nations are carried out in accordance with the legislative mandates and priorities adopted by Member States and with maximum regard for efficiency and effectiveness. A related objective will be to ensure a proper role of the regional, functional and sectoral intergovernmental bodies of the Organization in the planning and programming process. Those bodies complement the role of the central intergovernmental and expert bodies that present recommendations to the Economic and Social Council, as appropriate, and to the General Assembly.

42.5 Another central objective will be the further strengthening of the functions of control in the spending of the scarce financial resources at the disposal of the Organization and the fullest application of the principle of accountability of the responsible programme managers, regardless of the sources of funds at their disposal.

42.6 In order to achieve those objectives, several problems and issues will be addressed. In particular, the methodology and procedure for the preparation and consideration of the budget outline will need to be refined; the format of presentation of the programme budget needs improvement so that it will become less complicated and provide more transparency; the question of apportioned costs needs to be addressed; and the role of extrabudgetary financing in the overall financial structure of the United Nations will need to be precisely defined, and approval and reporting mechanisms will need to be scrutinized and controlled.

42.7 The delays in payments of assessed contributions have affected negatively the ability of the Organization to meet its financial obligations. The critical financial situation experienced by the Organization in recent years, as a result of those delays, underscores the need for, among other things, an effective financial management and control system. Accurate financial data and accounts of the United Nations must be maintained at all times, and the use made of United Nations resources must be justified and reported to the appropriate authorities and audited by the Board of Auditors. Efficient management of cash and timely disbursement for financial transactions are essential.

42.8 The unprecedented expansion of peace-keeping and related activities have made heavier demands on the human and financial resources of the United Nations and Member States. To meet better the increased demands and to improve the efficiency of the Secretariat in matters related to peace-keeping in general, steps have been taken starting in 1989 to improve existing arrangements in the Secretariat for the handling of peace-keeping operations. Following the establishment of a Senior Planning and Monitoring Group to assist in the forward planning for peace-keeping activities and monitoring the current operations the possibility has been considered of establishing a support account for peace-keeping operations to enable a more flexible response to changing requirements and to achieve a more equitable formula among the various peace-keeping operations. In addition, lines of responsibility within the organizational units dealing with those services are being reviewed in order to provide more comprehensive and integrated budget services such as budget formulation, monitoring and control in this area.

2. Overall strategy

42.9 This programme will continue to be implemented by the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance at Headquarters and by the various finance services of the Divisions of Administration and Programme Planning and Co-ordination Offices at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna, the regional commissions, and other United Nations offices away from Headquarters. While the General Assembly in its resolution 12 (I) of 13 February 1946 designated the Administrative and Financial Services as a principal unit of the Secretariat, the functions and organizational structure of the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance are described in the Secretary-General's Bulletin, ST/SGB/Organization, Section P(I) of April 1976, and ST/SGB/223 of 13 February 1987. Although the main responsibility centres located away from Headquarters have been delegated the authority to provide the required financial services, the Office will continue to develop policies and provide overall direction, guidance and management of financial services for the Organization as a whole.

42.10 Ongoing review, analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of the financial control systems and the financial policies underlying those systems will be carried out. Development of further measures to track and forecast the cash position of the Organization will be undertaken. In the area of contributions services, efforts will continue to be made to seek timely payment of contributions by Member States with a view to improving the cash flow situation of the Organization. Improvements in activities related to financial accounting and reporting will be made especially in the area of collection, preparation and integration of financial data from all overseas offices. Total automation in all treasury operation and increased co-ordination with other organizational units will be sought to ensure sound and efficient cash management of the United Nations.

42.11 In the area of programme planning, budgeting and monitoring, through the instrumentalities of the medium-term plan and the programme budget, programme managers will continue to be provided with the main management tools for the effective design of the Organization's programme of work in line with legislative mandates and priorities. Efforts will continue to achieve greater transparency of those documents through a simplication of their formats and a clearer presentation of programmatic information. In addition, the methodology for programme performance reporting will be further improved in order to increase its usefulness to managers.

42.12 In anticipation of the increasingly important role played by the Organization in the field of peace-keeping operations, the provision of financial services in that area will continue to be facilitated and enhanced to ensure that the decisions taken by the Security Council and the General Assembly are implemented effectively and efficiently. Emphasis will be placed on achieving a better co-ordination in the area of budgeting, irrespective of financing, namely, voluntary contributions or assessments for the regular budget of the Organization or peace-keeping operations.

42.13 Finally, the preparation of in-depth evaluations and the provision of support for self-evaluations at the regional and sectoral levels will continue to provide the intergovernmental bodies concerned with the elements for determining the programmes of work of the Organization and for controlling and assessing their implementation. To ensure that the quality of management is subject to constant improvement, management advisory services, such as in the form of management techniques, will continue to be provided to programme managers.

42.14 In carrying out those activities, the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance will continue to ensure effective co-ordination and co-operation with all other organizational units of the Secretariat, especially with regard to the application and implementation of the Financial Regulations and Rules, and the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation. At the inter-agency level, the Office will continue to be represented in consultations and meetings devoted to financial and budgetary questions with senior administrators of other organizations in the United Nations system, under the auspices of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions, the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, for the formulation of common positions on these questions.

3. Subprogramme structure and priorities

42.15 The following seven subprogrammes are proposed under the programme:

Subprogramme 1. Financial management and control systems

Subprogramme 2. Contributions assessment and processing

Subprogramme 3. Financial accounting and reporting

Subprogramme 4. Treasury services

Subprogramme 5. Programme planning, budgeting and monitoring

Subprogramme 6. Financial services relating to peace-keeping matters

Subprogramme 7. Evaluation and management advisory services

42.16 Priority will be given to activities under subprogrammes 5 (Programme planning, budget and monitoring) and 6 (Financial services relating to peace-keeping matters).

B. Subprogrammes

SUBPROGRAMME 1. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEMS

(a) Objectives

42.17 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 3043 (XXVII), 33/10 and 36/116 B, article X of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and article VI of the Staff Regulations.

42.18 The precarious financial situation of the Organization is likely to remain a major problem to be addressed during the period covered by the plan. In this context, effective financial management and control are essential and necessitate constant monitoring and evaluation of established financial policies and systems. There is an ongoing need for the provision of advice on such matters, including the revision of financial policies as circumstances warrant. Policy revisions need to be communicated quickly and clearly to all units of the Organization. Measures to track and forecast the cash flow of the Organization and to develop strategies to deal with anticipated problems in this regard will continue to require close attention.

42.19 The specific objectives of the subprogramme are the following: to improve and strengthen financial control systems in order to protect the assets of the Organization; to encourage the development of computerized systems in support of all organizational units under the subprogramme; to provide more timely financial reporting capabilities through the introduction of the integrated management information system; to improve the management of extrabudgetary funds and the responsiveness to audit recommendations; and to ensure the most comprehensive and cost-effective insurance protection for the United Nations and for its staff.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

42.20 During the medium-term plan period, particular attention will be given to a review, analysis and assessment of existing financial policies and control systems, to the provision of assistance in the development of new policies and systems as required and to the co-ordination of their installation at all United Nations offices. Co-operation with other organizations of the United Nations system in developing common financial policies will continue. Liaison with the Board of Auditors will be maintained and audit observations and management letters will be reviewed with a view to co-ordinating responses and following-up on remedial action. Control and reporting on travel entitlements of United Nations officials will continue. Co-ordination and supervision of all health, life, property and liability insurance activities of the United Nations will be carried out and alternative insurance plan structures will be studied. Secretariat services for the United Nations Claims Board and the Advisory Board on Compensation Claims will be provided and supervision of the implementation of awards will be exercised.

SUBPROGRAMME 2. CONTRIBUTIONS ASSESSMENT AND PROCESSING

(a) Objectives

42.21 The legislative authority for the subprogramme is article V of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

42.22 Continued delays in payments of assessed contributions by Member States have affected the ability of the Organization to meet its financial obligations.

41.23 The specific objectives of the subprogramme are therefore to continue to seek timely payment of assessed and voluntary contributions by Member States in order to meet the financial commitments of the United Nations, to maintain sound standards of financial accountability and management in order to provide accurate and timely information on the status of contributions, and to facilitate the work of the Committee on Contributions.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

42.24 Increased utilization of modern data-processing facilities will reduce staff time and resources in maintaining accurate contributions records of the Organization, thus facilitating the preparation of assessment documents and reports on status of contributions. Correspondence with Governments on assessed and voluntary contributions will continue to be handled, and the Committee on Contributions and the various pledging conferences will continue to be serviced.

SUBPROGRAMME 3. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING ACTIVITIES

(a) Objectives

42.25 The legislative authority of the subprogramme is articles X and XI of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

42.26 The preparation of timely and useful financial data is dependent upon expeditious collection and transmission of data from geographically dispersed organizational units. Improvement in the current methods of gathering and recording financial data is therefore needed so that the data will be readily available

centrally at Headquarters instead of being scattered worldwide. In order to effect payments and disbursements in a more timely and accurate manner, improved co-ordination among the relevant units of the Organization is required. In the area of computerization, the lack of co-ordination and compatibility among the now obsolete computerized systems for accounting, financial reporting and payroll, which were developed years ago in the various major duty stations, will be addressed.

42.27 The specific objectives of the subprogramme are the following: to improve telecommunications links between Headquarters and field offices to ensure the timely collection and processing of financial information and preparation of financial reports; to enhance management and cash flow reporting in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of certifying officers; to improve financial policies and procedures governing revenue-producing activities; to effect timely and accurate payments in respect of payroll, vendors and travel claims and other financial obligations of the Organization; and to provide accurate, timely and reliable interactive transaction processing.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

42.28 During the plan period, the financial obligations of the Organization will continue to be recorded, and accounts for the Organization's assets, liabilities, income and expenditure will continue to be maintained on a fund basis. The collection of monies and other receivables due to the Organization will be controlled and expenditures will be monitored. The computer linkage that will enable the sharing of information on the integrated personnel-payroll, travel and vendors related activities will be developed. Interactive processing will be extended to the payroll system and an interactive methodology for the preparation, authorization and approval of all remaining accounting documents will be introduced. It is intended to capture data at their point of origin to enable subsequent analysis, reporting and reconciliation.

SUBPROGRAMME 4. TREASURY SERVICES

(a) Objectives

42.29 The legislative authority for the subprogramme is articles VIII and IX of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

42.30 Accuracy of treasury records and efficient management of cash are essential for the sound finances of the Organization. Owing to the diverse and world-wide nature of the Organization's activities, financial transactions have to be made in a large number of currencies and involve many different banking arrangements. In order to effect approved cash disbursements, co-ordination between a number of organizational units must continue so that the large volume of bank cheques can be processed rapidly and accurately.

42.31 The specific objectives of the subprogramme continue to be the efficient administration of bank accounts, monitoring international currency exchange markets to establish the United Nations operational rates of exchange and to ensure that timely actions are taken with respect to short-term and medium-term investments of cash balances, ensuring the timely receipt and safe custody of all resources, making on time and accurate payments, and maintaining accurate subsidiary records.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

42.32 It is anticipated that total computerization of all treasury operations will be completed during the plan period. Closer monitoring of the cash flow should increase investment opportunities, thus contributing to an improvement of the cash situation of the Organization.

SUBPROGRAMME 5. PROGRAMME PLANNING, BUDGETING AND MONITORING

(a) Objectives

42.33 The legislative authority for the subprogramme is General Assembly resolutions 3043 (XXVII), 32/197, annex, section VI, 33/118, 34/224, 36/228 A, section I, 37/234 and annex (Regulations Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation), 38/227 A and B, 39/228, 40/240, 41/213, 42/211, 42/215, 43/219, 44/194, and 44/200 and the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

42.34 By its resolution 41/213, the General Assembly established the new budgetary process for the United Nations aiming, inter alia, at the participation of Member States in the budgetary preparation from its early stages and throughout the process. The need to improve the planning, programming and budgeting process and the consultative process for the formulation of the medium-term plan was thus recognized but subsequently, in resolution 43/214, the Assembly noted that the outline, as part of the process of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization, was still in a developmental period and that its methodology would require further improvement. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination has also recognized that the methodology used for the preparation of the programme budget was complex and presented a number of difficulties, including those in relation to the preparation of the outline. Improvements therefore are also needed in the methodology for the preparation of the programme budget and of its outline, to facilitate the comparability of estimates in those two instruments.

42.35 The operation and use of the contingency fund, which also forms part of the new budget process, is still at a developmental stage. While statements of programme budget implications play an important role in the budget process, their format and content will be kept under constant review, especially in the context of a comprehensive solution to the problem of all additional expenditures, including those deriving from inflation and currency fluctuation.

42.36 Over the years, there has been a steady growth in the level of extrabudgetary resources available to the United Nations vis-à-vis the regular budget. The need arises, therefore, to define more precisely their impact on the activities and programmes of the Organization and to review and revise the current methodology for the forecasting, approval and reporting of those resources.

42.37 The General Assembly continues to emphasize the importance of priority-setting as an integral part of the planning, programming and budgeting process and of a reliable methodology for monitoring programme performance. The relationship between priorities and extrabudgetary resources will have to be considered, and the methodology for monitoring and reporting on programme performance should be under constant review and improved in order to enhance the meaningful determination of implementation rates and comparison between actual delivery of final output and commitments set out in the programme narratives of the

programme budget. At the same time, a methodology for the harmonization of programme performance and budget performance reporting should also be developed.

42.38 The specific objectives of this subprogramme are the following:

(a) To ensure that legislative mandates are translated faithfully into a coherent and effective programme structure so that all activities of the United Nations are well co-ordinated and efficiently managed;

(b) To ensure that the strategy set out in the medium-term plan is implemented in terms of specific outputs and services according to legislative intent, and that this is being done with the most effective and efficient utilization of resources;

(c) To prepare the proposed biennial programme budgets of the Organization within the framework of the approved medium-term plan and on the basis of the approved outline, with due regard for all relevant legislative mandates; to monitor the implementation of the approved programme budget; to improve the application of budgetary techniques; and to further develop realistic estimates of income and expenditure of extrabudgetary funds;

(d) To continue to improve the integrated process of programming, planning, budgeting and monitoring in all sectors of the programme budget in order to ensure consistency in the overall presentation of the programme budget and treatment of priorities;

(e) To continue to provide the necessary data on actual programme performance to intergovernmental bodies.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

42.39 During the plan period, methodologies and procedures for medium-term planning will continue to be reviewed, improved and, if necessary, revised. Under the guidance of the Programme Planning and Budgeting Board, the proposed medium-term plan for the period beginning in 1998 will be prepared, taking into account the comments and recommendations of intergovernmental organs.

42.40 Outlines will be prepared for the proposed programme budgets for the bienniums 1994-1995, 1996-1997 and 1998-1999. Proposals will be formulated with respect to the determination of an optimum level for and the operation of a contingency fund for those bienniums. With the new programme budget management system already in place, the preparation, implementation and reporting of the programme budget will be further facilitated. The budget format will continue to be reviewed and refined to achieve transparency between objectives of subprogrammes and resources allocated.

42.41 In the area of monitoring, programme performance reports will continue to be provided to the General Assembly through the Committee on Programme and Co-ordination. Standardized methods and procedures to assist programme managers in the reporting exercise will be further refined. An automated information system for easier data entry and faster access to information has been developed and will be constantly reviewed.

SUBPROGRAMME 6. FINANCIAL SERVICES RELATING TO PEACE-KEEPING MATTERS

(a) Objectives

42.42 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly and Security Council resolutions relating to the restoration and maintenance of international peace and security, the latest of which are Assembly resolutions 44/44, 44/187, 44/188, 44/189, 44/190, 44/191 and 44/192 A to C as well as Security Council resolutions 628 (1989), 643 (1989), 645 (1989), 648 (1990), 650 (1990) and 651 (1990).

42.43 Owing to the significant increase in the activities of the Organization relating to the restoration and maintenance of international peace and security, there is an even greater need for the timely provision of adequate financial resources for the peace-keeping operations mandated by the Security Council in order that they may carry out their assigned functions and responsibilities with maximum efficiency and economy. The expansion of the United Nations peace-keeping activities has resulted in increased demand on the human, material and financial resources of the Organization and of Member States.

42.44 The specific objective of the subprogramme is to ensure that adequate resources are made available for the effective implementation of decisions taken by the Security Council and the General Assembly in connection with the restoration and maintenance of international peace and security. This would include necessary financial resources for the maintenance of existing peace-keeping operations and for the establishment of new peace-keeping operations and, in particular, resources essential for the initial start-up of such operations.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

42.45 Through extensive utilization of office automation facilities, efforts will be made to facilitate the monitoring of peace-keeping budgets and other financial data relating to peace-keeping. In addition, the following activities will continue to be undertaken as long as they are mandated and required: preparation of the Secretary-General's proposed budget estimates and reports to the General Assembly and the Security Council for the financing of peace-keeping operations; issuance of financial authorizations and comprehensive budget instructions to peace-keeping missions; control and monitoring of expenditures; and determination and review of the rates of reimbursements to troop-contributing Governments and maintenance of liaison with those Governments in respect of financial matters.

SUBPROGRAMME 7. EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT ADVISORY SERVICES

(a) Objectives

42.46 The legislative authority for the subprogramme is General Assembly resolutions 32/197 (annex, sect. VI), 36/228 B, 37/234 (annex, article VI), 38/227 A (sects. II, III and IV), 39/228, 40/240, 41/213, 42/215, 43/219 and 44/194.

42.47 The relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the activities of the Organization need to be kept under continuous review by programme managers and intergovernmental bodies if programme delivery is to be improved. In the area of management techniques, programme managers in the Secretariat require support, advice and training so that decisions are made effectively to address the perceived needs of the departments.

42.48 The specific objectives of this subprogramme are the following:

(a) To improve the management of the United Nations by determining systematically the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the activities of the Organization in the light of its goals and objectives and, based on such determination, to facilitate the revision, as necessary, of the programmes of the Organization with a view to enhancing their contribution to the achievement of those goals and objectives;

(b) To further that general objective by continuing to maintain and develop an internal evaluation system as an integrated component of the planning, programming and budgeting process; to provide central specialized intergovernmental bodies with in-depth evaluation studies for their consideration; to provide management advisory services to senior officials in the Secretariat; and to update, co-ordinate and monitor organizational tools.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

42.49 The course of action to be followed by the Secretariat has the following components:

(a) In-depth evaluations: in-depth evaluations and triennial reviews will be undertaken as requested by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. Based on experience, methodology will continue to be refined and improved;

(b) Self-evaluation by programme managers: substantive support will continue to be provided to evaluation units at the regional and sectoral levels. Evaluation training seminars will be conducted regularly at all duty stations. During the plan period, evaluation will become an integral component of programme management;

(c) Management advisory services: management advisory assistance to offices and departments will continue to be provided. Critical attention will be given to increasing efficiency and to providing more timely and effective responses to management problems identified by, inter alia, the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Committee on Programme and Co-ordination, the Joint Inspection Unit and the Boards of External and Internal Auditors;

(d) Organizational tools: the following continuing activities will be carried out: Provision of support services in the issuances of administrative instructions, up-dating and maintaining the organization manual of the Secretariat and control and management in the supply and design of forms used by the Secretariat.

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PROPOSED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997*

MAJOR PROGRAMME X. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Programme 43. General services

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* The present document contains programme 43 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. The complete medium-term plan will subsequently be issued in final printed form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/45/6/Rev.1).

PROGRAMME 43. GENERAL SERVICES

A. Programme

1. General orientation

43.1 The legislative authority for the present programme derives from General Assembly resolution 13 (I) of 13 February 1946, in which the Conference and General Services was designated as a principal unit of the Secretariat. Secretary-General Bulletin ST/SGB/Organization, P (III), dated January 1974, established the Office of General Services for the purpose of implementing the programme at Headquarters and describes its responsibilities. Within their respective areas, corresponding organizational units at United Nations offices away from Headquarters have been assigned comparable responsibilities as and when they were established.

43.2 The primary objective of the programme is to provide essential support services to substantive programmes and conference and other common services programmes. That support takes the form of security and safety services, electronic support, including telecommunications, field operations support, procurement and transportation services, facilities management, and archives and records management services. While general services are of a continuing nature, they need to be adjusted to the changing requirements of the substantive and other programmes that they are designed to support. That is apparent when the particular problems to be addressed in each of those areas are considered at the outset of the medium-term plan period.

43.3 As part of the efforts to widen further knowledge and appreciation of the Organization, as well as its goals and methods of work, the public at large has wide access to United Nations premises at Headquarters and other locations. At the same time, delegates, visiting dignitaries and staff must have adequate security and safety in the performance of their functions for the Organization. Reconciling those two objectives in an environment that can easily become a target in a world increasingly prone to acts of violence and terrorism constitutes the main problem that security and safety services have to address.

43.4 Advances in technological innovations in the 1980s have allowed the Organization to meet an increased workload without prejudice to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, in which the Assembly mandated, inter alia, a reduction in personnel and changes in the organizational structure of the Secretariat. The increased use of office automation equipment, such as word processors, microcomputers and other new technologies, in the electronic and communication fields has facilitated the work of the Organization. In particular, the expanded use of new technologies, such as high-speed facsimile machines, satellite earth stations and electronic transmission of data has allowed a faster response by the Organization to the needs of peace-keeping operations and related activities. Rapid developments in technology, however, create a constant need to update existing equipment. Furthermore, in order to develop the necessary applications, skills that differ from those readily available in the Secretariat are often required, with a resulting reliance on external expertise. Also, the absence of a comprehensive training programme seriously limits the use and benefits to be derived from technological innovations.

43.5 The significant and unprecedented expansion of peace-keeping and related activities through the establishment of a number of field missions during recent years has strained the ability of the Secretariat to provide the services required and to administer the increased number of peace-keeping operations with the degree of attention that those demand. Difficulties have been encountered, owing to the necessary unpredictable timing of new operations and the particularly short lead-time allowed for their establishment. A wide range of concerns needs to be addressed if administrative and logistical support to peace-keeping operations is to be provided in the future in a timely, complete, efficient and cost-effective manner.

43.6 Another continuing challenge is to ensure that the United Nations obtains the required goods and services on time and from the lowest acceptable bidders in areas of procurement and transportation.

43.7 Over the past few years, the impact of the current financial crisis on major maintenance has increased the need to renovate and modernize existing facilities. Aging structures and technical installations in most of the older buildings have suffered in recent years from a piecemeal approach to major maintenance, alterations and improvement. It is now imperative to establish a major maintenance programme capable of bringing electrical and mechanical systems to optimum performance levels, introducing modern energy-saving systems, adapting existing facilities to new uses as the Organization's needs change, and, most importantly, preventing further deterioration of United Nations facilities. An overall integrated facilities management policy for the principal properties needs to be formulated and executed to meet functional demands, owing to the magnitude of properties currently occupied and maintained by the Organization and those under construction.

43.8 With regard to archives and records management, the rapid evolution of information and communication technologies is gradually making reliance on paper-based information obsolete. New methods for preserving the full content of records and archival materials in machine readable files, including the optical disc, must be introduced to provide access to fragile archive documents without the necessity of handling those documents.

2. Overall strategy

43.9 Activities under the programme will be carried out by the Office of General Services at Headquarters. Within their respective spheres, the organizational units of United Nations offices away from Headquarters and at the regional commissions undertaking general services support will also carry out the activities under the programme. Those units include, inter alia, the General Services Service within the Division of Administration at the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Division of Administrative Services and Common Services at the United Nations Office at Vienna, Common Services, Nairobi, and the divisions of administration at the regional commissions. In carrying out those functions, a co-ordinated and systematic approach to the problems of common concerns related to security and safety, electronic support, procurement and transportation and facilities management will be pursued. The Office of General Services at Headquarters will continue to develop policies and provide guidance to overseas offices on policies and practices concerning those issues.

43.10 In the area of security and safety services, staff training and increased reliance on modern technology are expected to generate a higher quality of services and best use of limited staff resources in the face of increasing demands.

43.11 Electronic support will be geared toward the provision of a technological environment of broad applicability to many substantive programmes. The upgrading of the telecommunications capacity of the Organization and the installation of an organization-wide electronic mail system will receive priority. To ensure organization-wide compatibility and thus maintain maximum effectiveness, the policy consisting in the establishment of global standards for hardware, software and communications will be continued and expanded. While reliance on outside expertise will continue for projects of a one-time nature, the internal development of which would be costly and unproductive, increased emphasis will be placed on staff training to ensure that skills necessary for ongoing work are kept up to date.

43.12 For field operations support, it is expected that appropriate arrangements will be authorized to set in place reserve stocks of commonly used equipment and stores for peace-keeping operations. Subject to adequate funding, procedures will be established to ensure that an available cadre of core personnel skilled and trained in the required disciplines can be mobilized quickly into new mission locations.

43.13 In the area of procurement and transportation, efforts will be pursued to establish a centralized procurement system for all United Nations offices and the specialized agencies, with a view to increasing potential for price reduction and improving delivery of items.

43.14 An integrated and co-ordinated global facilities management policy for premises owned and leased by the United Nations at Headquarters, Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi, The Hague and at the seat of the regional commissions at Addis Ababa, Baghdad, Bangkok and Santiago will be formulated and implemented during the medium-term plan period, including the establishment of long-range programmes for major maintenance, alterations and improvements at those locations. Modernization of space accommodation and technical support systems in line with current requirements for meeting and programme activities, inter-linked communications and energy conservation are the objectives for the medium-term plan period.

43.15 Records management programmes based on new technologies will be developed to permit systematic storage and retrieval of information. The possibility of implementing new technologies such as optical disk storage will continue to be explored with a view to determining the most suitable technologies for United Nations applications.

3. Subprogramme structure and priorities

43.16 The following six subprogrammes are proposed under the programme:

Subprogramme 1. Security and safety

Subprogramme 2. Electronic support services

Subprogramme 3. Field operations support

Subprogramme 4. Commercial, procurement and transportation services

Subprogramme 5. Facilities management, maintenance and construction

Subprogramme 6. Archives and records management

Priority will be given to subprogramme 3 (Field operations support) and subprogramme 5 (Facilities management, maintenance and construction).

B. Subprogrammes

SUBPROGRAMME 1. SECURITY AND SAFETY

(a) Objectives

43.17 The legislative authority of the subprogramme derives from Secretary-General Bulletin ST/SGB/Organization, section P (III).

43.18 The subprogramme will continue to aim at ensuring the security and safety of visiting dignitaries, delegates, staff and visitors as well as the security and safety of properties within the complex of United Nations offices both at Headquarters (Secretariat building and outside premises) and at other locations. The objective is to create a safe and secure environment in which the Organization can carry out its work effectively. To that end, periodic inspections of offices away from Headquarters will be undertaken in order to ensure that uniform procedures are in effect. Training programmes for security officers at those offices will be initiated and rotation of security staff between stations will be encouraged, when required.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

43.19 The subprogramme is carried out by the Security and Safety Service of the Office of General Services at Headquarters, corresponding units in the divisions of administration at locations away from Headquarters and Common Services, Nairobi.

43.20 In the course of the medium-term plan period, in addition to continuing activities, the following improvement programmes will take place:

(a) Mandatory training courses will be organized in the areas of investigation, patrolling and first-aid and in the related fields of safety, such as fire emergencies and electronic security systems, including closed circuit television alarms;

(b) Physical training facilities for security and safety services will be improved;

(c) The infrastructure for security services will be rationalized and modernized with a view to achieving savings in manpower and improvements in efficiency;

(d) At Headquarters, a complex-wide access control system will be installed, following a feasibility study on the extent of its usefulness and its adaptability to the specific needs of the Organization. Experience in the increased use of

access control systems by hospitals, large corporations and business entities indicates that it not only provides a higher level of access control with its positive security and safety implications but also has features that have proven extremely useful to management;

(e) The pass and identification systems will be upgraded;

(f) Further expansion of the closed circuit TV system will continue during the plan period at Headquarters. Mobile cameras will be equipped with time recorders to facilitate the task of surveillance.

SUBPROGRAMME 2. ELECTRONIC SUPPORT SERVICES

(a) Objectives

43.21 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolution 2611 (XXIV) of 16 December 1969 and Secretary-General Bulletin ST/SGB/Organization P (VI), dated March 1976.

43.22 The activities under the subprogramme will aim at providing efficient, reliable and cost-effective mainframe computer operations to all offices in the Organization whose work programme requires computer support, assisting programme offices in the development of electronic applications necessary to fulfil their programme of activities, providing an efficient and reliable electronic communications network globally, not only for the United Nations but also for the specialized agencies, participating in inter-agency programmes relating to electronic services, such as the Advisory Committee for Co-ordination of Information Systems and the International Computing Centre, and exploring new technologies and their applicability to the work of the Organization.

43.23 The office automation programme, which has been developed at Headquarters over the past decade, has not progressed at the same pace at other duty stations. Arrangements will have to be made to provide those offices with facilities and capabilities similar to those available at Headquarters and a replacement programme for office automation will need to be developed and implemented at those locations. Compatibility of hardware and software will need to be ensured. Interfaces between computer configurations at different duty stations should allow direct input to the facsimile and telex switches.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

43.24 In the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213, the activities of the subprogramme, which were previously under the direct responsibility of the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, have been transferred to the Office of General Services.

43.25 In the course of the medium-term plan period, the following activities will be carried out by the Office of General Services and in particular its Electronic Services Division at Headquarters, the Division of Administration at the United Nations Office at Geneva and the regional commissions, the Division of Administrative Services and Common Services at the United Nations Office at Vienna and Common Services, Nairobi:

(a) In the area of office automation:

(i) Expansion of the current programme whereby microcomputers, capable of word and data-processing functions, are installed in all offices in which they are required and linked via local areas networks (LAN) capable of communicating with larger processors and of performing functions, such as electronic mail, word processing, desk-top publishing and data base spreadsheet;

(ii) Replacement or upgrading mainframe computers;

(iii) Assistance to substantive programmes in replacing obsolete data bases, so that access can be provided to a large number of users;

(iv) Monitoring the information systems in order to ensure that the data communications network is fully functional and expanding as the integrated management information system is implemented and as additional agencies use the facilities;

(b) In the area of telecommunications:

(i) Upgrading of telecommunications capabilities to provide world wide electronic communications services and network facilities at Headquarters, the major duty stations, peace-keeping operations and specialized agencies;

(ii) Enhancement of telephone communications to accommodate data transmission.

43.26 A shift in the major activities of the applications analysts and programmers will begin, centring on consulting rather than on systems maintenance. Systems maintenance will, thus, be transferred to user departments. In that way, a smaller staff will be able to provide design and implementation assistance to more programmes. Modern development tools and techniques, such as computer-aided software engineering (CASE) technology and prototyping, will be introduced. Initial steps will be taken to expand access to data bases, not only world wide. To that end, new data base management packages will be installed for administrative-type data and for text. Computer security will be enhanced.

SUBPROGRAMME 3. FIELD OPERATIONS SUPPORT

(a) General orientation

43.27 The legislative authority of the subprogramme derives from Secretary-General Bulletin ST/SGB/Organization, section P (III). Its purpose is the support of peace-keeping operations and other field missions established by the Security Council or by the Secretary-General.

43.28 The general aim of the subprogramme is to provide managerial, administrative, financial, personnel and logistics support to peace-keeping operations, special missions, relief operations and other missions as the Secretary-General may decide. In the execution of those functions, close co-operation and co-ordination is maintained with the Office for Special Political Affairs and the divisions of administration of offices away from Headquarters.

43.29 A specific objective during the period under review will be to rationalize, regularize and streamline procedures for the start-up of new peace-keeping operations and other field missions, while, at the same time, enhancing the capacity to maintain an acceptable level of ongoing activity within the subprogramme in the support and monitoring of all the field operations being administered.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

43.30 By General Assembly resolution 41/213, the administrative functions of the Office for Field Operational and External Support Activities were transferred to the Department of Administration and Management and, in the reorganization that followed, field operations was re-established as a division within the Office of General Services.

43.31 In the course of the medium-term plan period, the Office of General Services and, in particular, its Field Operations Division will pursue measures to develop and maintain a high degree of operational readiness and capability to mount new peace-keeping operations and other missions in response to resolutions and decisions aimed at preserving and maintaining peace and security in troubled areas of the world.

43.32 In order to satisfy the more immediate operational requirements associated with the establishment of new missions, the Field Operations Division will undertake the following activities:

(a) Identify a qualified pool of specialized civilian personnel, both individuals and organized units, that may be called upon at short notice to supplement core staff;

(b) Establish a reserve stock of commonly-used equipment and supplies and develop an inventory of resources available at short notice from Member States;

(c) Review current arrangements for the provision of technical and administrative services with a view to identifying alternative methods of providing such services.

43.33 In response to the increasingly complex nature of peace-keeping operations and the introduction of more sophisticated technologies, the Field Operations Division will undertake the following activities:

(a) Develop training programmes to enhance the skills of staff already on board, as well as for the orientation of new staff, both military and civilian;

(b) Develop an expanded and more technologically-advanced communications capability supported by more highly trained communications personnel for both inter- and intra-mission communications;

(c) Pursue the concept of standardization, with a view to ensuring optimum compatibility between missions and to facilitate procurement and maintenance;

(d) Within the general framework of the integrated management information system, develop and expand computer capability for the missions and the Field Operations Division, with a view to integrating and standardizing data and text-processing capabilities to ensure interchangeability of information.

SUBPROGRAMME 4. COMMERCIAL, PROCUREMENT AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

(a) Objectives

43.34 The legislative authority of the subprogramme derives from Secretary-General bulletins ST/SGB/Organization, section P (III) and ST/SGB/Organization, section B.

43.35 The major aim of the subprogramme is to plan, provide, manage and administer the commercial, procurement and transportation activities and support services for other programmes and for peace-keeping operations in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

43.36 Greater co-ordination between the procurement programmes of the various substantive offices is needed to meet the latter's needs quickly and effectively. New technologies have yet to be applied systematically to all aspects of the Organization's procurement and travel-related operations.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

43.37 In the course of the medium-term plan period, the Office of General Services at Headquarters and, in particular, its Commercial, Purchase and Transportation Service, as well as the corresponding units at locations away from Headquarters, will continue their efforts for:

(a) The establishment of a centralized procurement system in the United Nations;

(b) The linking of the materials management information system, a new system package introduced at Headquarters that allows greater efficiency and productivity in the procurement process, to third-party computer systems using the electronic data interchange, which will enable fast and accurate exchange of purchase orders and freight-forwarding information between the United Nations and the vendors;

(c) The application of the materials management information system in the procurement activities of other offices;

(d) The issuance of the United Nations laissez-passer as a machine-readable document in accordance with the rules and procedures formulated by the International Civil Aviation Organization on the standardization of verification of passports by national authorities;

(e) The computerization, in conjunction with the implementation of the integrated management information system, of travel authorizations, claims and other travel-related internal documents;

(f) The establishment of a dedicated system linking all duty stations in order to avoid duplication of work and to facilitate the issuance, renewal and cancellation of travel authorizations.

SUBPROGRAMME 5. FACILITIES MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION

(a) Objectives

43.38 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 39/236 and 37/14; and Secretary-General bulletins ST/SGB/Organization, section P (III) and ST/SGB/Organization, section B.

43.39 The objectives of the subprogramme are: to provide effective and efficient planning, management, maintenance and operation for all existing physical facilities of the Organization and electronic communication expertise for all meeting facilities; to plan, in particular for offices away from Headquarters, new facilities and technical installations required for intergovernmental and inter-agency meetings and conferences and for other mandated activities of the Organization; and to provide an efficient, reliable and cost-effective means of transmitting official correspondence and material by providing a pouch and postal service world wide and a messenger service within each United Nations complex.

43.40 Advances in the sciences of building and technical support systems have accelerated in the past decade. While the Organization has begun to incorporate many of those changes, the programme of maintenance, modernization and improvements was affected by the necessity to defer previously approved projects during the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. The value and number of existing properties of the Organization and those under construction require the development of data bases for all major properties; guidelines on space standards; a review of long-range space requirements and master-development plans at all locations; technical and management manuals for the maintenance of buildings; and the formulation of long-range maintenance programmes at principal locations and its implementation. Many of the activities of the subprogramme should be directed toward facilitating significant operational improvements in either one or more of the continuing activities of the subprogramme or other activities under the major programme of general services.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

43.41 In the course of the medium-term plan period, the Office of General Services at Headquarters and the Overseas Property Management and Construction Unit and the Building Management Service, in particular, acting in close co-operation with its counterparts at offices away from Headquarters, will undertake the following activities:

(a) Develop an integrated and co-ordinated management policy for the principal facilities owned by the Organization, including the establishment of comprehensive data bases for all major properties and long-range programmes for major maintenance and the documentation of standards and guidelines for the maintenance and operation of facilities. That will require the modernization of operating and administrative procedures for facilities management, including the computerization of preventive maintenance and operating procedures, and the establishment of computer-based graphic and data base systems for computer-assisted facilities management;

(b) Continue the modernization and improvements of existing facilities, which will include: the renovation and restoration of building exteriors and surrounding grounds; the updating of building systems for energy efficiency and safety; the

expansion of the programme of replacement of elevators and of building automation and telephone systems; and the introduction of more efficient space planning concepts;

(c) Implement projects for capital improvements and new construction, which will include management and direction of new construction and major alterations financed by the Organization or provided by host Governments and other entities; and conduct studies on the cost-effectiveness of leased properties;

(d) Continue, at the Headquarters complex, the modernization of premises and the reconfiguration of office space, using open space-planning concepts to improve work environment and to increase space utilization, thus facilitating the accommodation at the Headquarters complex of the archives and records management, which is currently housed in rented premises in Park Avenue South;

(e) Review, on a regular basis with a view to improving their efficiency and effectiveness, the following activities: conference room electronic support, including radio and television broadcast operations; heating, ventilating, air-conditioning; architectural and engineering services; reception and information services; electrical maintenance; elevator operation and maintenance; cleaning services; office space planning; property management and control; facilities operation and repair; and mail management.

SUBPROGRAMME 6. ARCHIVES AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

(a) Objectives

43.42 The legislative authority of the subprogramme derives from Secretary-General Bulletin ST/SGB/Organization, section P (III).

43.43 The major aim of the subprogramme is to obtain the most efficient and economical use of the Organization's records resources. The Office of General Services provides guidance on all phases of the management of paper-based and electronic records; preserves and services archive materials; and provides advice to other offices on matters pertaining to current and archival records. A specific objective for the medium-term plan period is to integrate the archives and records management activities into an automated United Nations information system as an element in the information resources management system.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

43.44 In the course of the medium-term plan period, a number of continuing activities will be carried out by the Office of General Services and the Archives and Records Management Section, in particular, as well as by the corresponding units at offices away from Headquarters. Those activities include monitoring and controlling of the records management systems; maintaining custody of non-current records and archives of the United Nations; providing reference services to external and internal users; carrying out the arrangement and description of permanent records and their transfer from originating offices; and maintaining custody of the sound archives and providing reference services to users.

43.45 In addition, the Office of General Services will undertake the following activities:

(a) Continue to explore the possibility of introducing optical disk and other technologies for automated information storage and retrieval to selected information process;

(b) Utilize local area networks to increase exchange and sharing of information;

(c) Develop guidelines and directives under the new life-cycle management concept to ensure that departments and offices assume records management responsibilities; undertake records surveys of paper-based and electronic records, with a view to establishing a comprehensive disposition programme; and introduce automated control of records throughout their life-cycle;

(d) Participate in the development of an information-management process that stores electronic information for record keeping on electronic media, instead of converting those to paper;

(e) Undertake a study of all United Nations offices away from Headquarters on the feasibility of concentrating all non-current records and archives in a central repository.

43.46 In carrying out those activities, the subprogramme will interface closely with the Electronic Services Division to enhance the systematic and orderly development and introduction of new technologies.

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PROPOSED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997*

MAJOR PROGRAMME X. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Programme 44. Services to the public

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* The present document contains programme 44 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. The complete medium-term plan will subsequently be issued in final printed form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/45/6/Rev.1).

PROGRAMME 44. SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC

A. Programme

1. General orientation

44.1 The primary objective of the programme is to promote, publicize and disseminate the work and achievements of the United Nations to the public. Related activities, introduced over the years by the Secretary-General in furtherance of the general aims and purposes of the Organization, include the sale of United Nations philatelic items and commemorative medals, which is designed to publicize the Organization's achievements and various aspects of its work programme; the sale of publications, the primary purpose of which is to disseminate information on the activities of the United Nations on as wide a basis as possible; and the guided lecture tours, which are operated for the purpose of making visitors and the general public aware of the activities and aims of the United Nations. The United Nations Gift Centre, through its sale of United Nations souvenirs, handicrafts and other souvenirs from around the world, is an integral part of the information disseminated to visitors and others about the Organization.

44.2 The activities under the programme, which are carried out not only at Headquarters but also at Geneva and Vienna, are directed by three distinct organizational units: the Office of General Services, the Department of Conference Services and the Department of Public Information, resulting in a diffusion of responsibility. The need for a more integrated and co-ordinated approach in dealing with the public led to the establishment in 1989 of a Senior Advisory Board on Services to the Public, which assists the Secretary-General in the formulation of overall policies.

44.3 In addition to the need for a more integrated and co-ordinated approach to the activities under this programme, which is a question that will require the continued attention of the Secretary-General and the Senior Advisory Board during the medium-term plan period, the following problems need to be addressed:

(a) Philatelic sales, which constitute by far the largest source of revenues under the programme, have been affected over the past three biennium by a shrinking market for United Nations products. Similarly, the demand for United Nations medals has not met expectations over the past biennia;

(b) It has become apparent that the items for sale at the Gift Centre at Headquarters do not clearly reflect the basic purposes of the United Nations or the cultural diversity of the Organization;

(c) The markets for United Nations sales publications have not been fully exploited to foster adequate dissemination of information on the activities of the Organization;

(d) Guided tours in New York, Geneva or Vienna are not targeted to specific segments of the public and their format is largely outdated.

2. Overall strategy

44.4 During the plan period, the assignment and co-ordination of responsibilities under the programme will continue to be monitored by the Senior Advisory Board on Services to the Public, the membership of which includes senior managers involved in the provision of such services, namely, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services, the Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments, the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information, the Assistant-Secretary-General for General Services and a representative of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

44.5 The activities that will be undertaken will aim at promoting an integrated and unified approach to dealing with public services at Headquarters, enhancing the image of the United Nations for the public, and increasing revenues, while ensuring maximum public awareness of the work and objectives of the United Nations. Furthermore, the Senior Advisory Board will assist and provide appropriate guidance to the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and to the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna with regard to income-generating activities at those offices.

44.6 A number of studies on services to the public have been carried out during the biennium 1988-1989. They relate to philatelic sales, the visitors/sales area at Headquarters, and the feasibility of establishing a children's tour at Headquarters. Follow-up on those and other studies will take place during the medium-term plan period.

3. Subprogramme structure

44.7 On the basis of the general orientation of the programme, the following four subprogrammes are proposed:

Subprogramme 1. Sale of philatelic items

Subprogramme 2. Commemorative medals and gift items

Subprogramme 3. Sale of United Nations publications

Subprogramme 4. Services to visitors

44.8 Priority will be given to the activities under subprogrammes 3 and 4.

B. Subprogrammes

SUBPROGRAMME 1. SALE OF PHILATELIC ITEMS

(a) Objectives

44.9 The legislative authority for subprogramme 1 derives from General Assembly resolutions 454 (V) of 16 November 1950, by which the Assembly authorized the establishment of the United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA), and 657 (VII) of 6 November 1952. The responsibilities of UNPA are described in the manual on the

organization of the Secretariat (ST/SGB/Organization, sect. P(III)), of January 1974. In response to Assembly resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986 on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations, major changes were made in the organization of the Office of General Services, and the activities of UNPA were placed under the responsibility of the newly created Buildings and Commercial Services Division of that Office.

44.10 Stamp collecting has become a less popular hobby over the past decade, especially among the young, a trend recorded not only by the United Nations but also by all philatelic administrations around the world. As a result, an increasing proportion of United Nations stamps are utilized for the processing of mail. Since UNPA has to pay the Postal Administrations at Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna for the costs of carrying this mail, the amount of revenue generated has decreased steadily over the past years.

44.11 The specific and time-limited objective of the subprogramme is to develop proposals on themes and designs of United Nations stamps and various philatelic items, which could prove as popular and generate as much revenue as recent issues such as the Flag Series, which ended in 1989; to provide policy and operational direction to the UNPA offices in New York, Geneva and Vienna and to maintain liaison with the United States, Swiss, Austrian and other postal authorities as well as with the Universal Postal Union regarding philatelic and postal regulations and procedures; to assure the security and archival safekeeping of postal stocks; and to increase revenue by developing consistently more appropriate marketing strategies and introducing new procedures to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

44.12 During the plan period, market studies will be undertaken to counter the decrease in philatelic sales and profits. The marketing studies will include (a) development of world-wide marketing and promotion objectives and policies, (b) product line planning to meet the needs of a world-wide customer base and (c) investigating and identifying appropriate opportunities to increase penetration of existing or new markets in order to generate additional revenues and to disseminate information on United Nations activities.

44.13 UNPA will also continue the enhancement of its office automation in all three offices, giving particular attention to improvements in mail orders. The automated system for handling customer orders will be further improved to yield more useful management information and reports. It is hoped that those efforts would lead to increased efficiency of operations and a concomitant reduction in costs.

44.14 In implementing the activities under the subprogramme, UNPA will endeavour to explore the possibility of increasing sales to the casual collector of United Nations stamps by developing new products that would appeal to that target group. The possibility of issuing additional series of stamps on popular topical themes will continue to be pursued.

44.15 Co-operative ventures in products, research and marketing will be sought with other postal administrations in order to increase market shares in specific segments of the philatelic market. In that regard, it is envisaged that joint philatelic products might be issued with other postal administrations for this purpose.

44.16 In order to promote and publicize the efforts of the United Nations through its philatelic sales on as wide a geographical area as possible, the feasibility of issuing the United Nations stamps in additional outlets will also be studied.

SUBPROGRAMME 2. COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS AND GIFT ITEMS

(a) Objectives

44.17 The legislative authority for subprogramme 2 derives from General Assembly resolution 2499 (XXIV) for commemorative medals and 583 (VI) for gift items. The related responsibilities of the Buildings and Commercial Services Division of the Office of General Services are described in the manual on the organization of the Secretariat (ST/SGB/Organization, sect. P(III)) of January 1974.

44.18 The major objectives of the subprogramme are as follows:

(a) Commemorative medals: to publicize the work and objectives of the United Nations and its specialized agencies through the issuance of United Nations commemorative and peace medals while at the same time generating revenue through sales;

(b) Gift items: to provide visitors, staff members and members of delegations in New York with United Nations mementos, United Nations souvenirs, handicrafts and other souvenirs from around the world.

44.19 Over the past three biennia, revenues from the United Nations Gift Centre located at Headquarters have steadily increased, which can be attributed in part to the increase in the number of visitors. The Gift Centre has also improved operational and inventory controls, which has resulted in the provision of a wider selection of fast selling items. However, it has become a matter of growing concern that the merchandise carried in the Centre does not sufficiently promote the basic purposes of the United Nations or reflect the Organization's national and cultural diversity. Furthermore, the sales facilities do not present a uniform, high quality image.

44.20 As to medal sales, their decreasing profitability resulted in the non-renewal of an existing contract for their production and a significant disruption in sales during the biennium 1988-1989. A new contract was entered into on 21 April 1989.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

44.21 Vigorous efforts will be made to expand the United Nations commemorative and peace medal programme by direct mail advertising to capture an additional market share and increase net revenue.

44.22 Increased purchases from artisans of less developed countries on as wide a geographical basis as possible will be pursued in order to have product themes for the Gift Centre that are consistent with the purposes and mission of the United Nations as well as to increase the uniqueness of the merchandise. Items that are regarded as slow moving or of questionable appropriateness will be eliminated. Advertisements will be inserted in selected publications, since experience has shown that the Centre has to compete vigorously in the international craft and gift items market, which has increased significantly in New York in recent years.

44.23 The main visitors and retail operations area at Headquarters, namely, the first basement concourse of the General Assembly building, will be redesigned in order to maximize the potential of the space used for commercial purposes. The major retail facilities, namely, the gift centre, the bookstore and the stamp counter, will be given more prominent locations. Co-ordination and co-operation among the various sales and promotional activities will be encouraged.

SUBPROGRAMME 3. SALE OF UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATIONS

(a) Objectives

44.24 The sale of United Nations publications is under the reponsibility of the Publishing Division of the Department of Conference Services, as described in ST/SGB/Organization, Section Q/Rev.2 and Corr.1. The mandate of the Publications Board, as set forth in financial rules 110.38 and 110.39 and ST/SGB/Organization, annex I, includes the responsibility to determine the policies governing the sale of United Nations documents.

44.25 The primary objective in the sale of United Nations publications is to provide an added channel of dissemination of information about the Organization, its work and related topics of interest at no cost to the Organization and to generate revenues as possible through a balanced free distribution and sales policy aimed at generating the greatest possible sale of successful publications.

44.26 Net revenues accruing from the sale of United Nations publications in New York, Geneva and Vienna have been drastically reduced since the biennium 1984-1985. That decrease can be attributed in part to growing production and distribution costs. It is recognized that the majority of United Nations publications are specialized in nature and, as such, reach a limited market. In addition to the dissemination of public information materials, greater attention will be given to encouraging the development and marketing of publications of a more general nature.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

44.27 As a result of the review of the sale of publications, activities will be broadened with a view to appealing to a wider audience through a careful selection of sales items, the dissemination of publications in electronic formats, and experimentation with differential pricing structures as a means of increasing the dissemination of United Nations materials in developing countries.

44.28 Efforts will also be directed towards the achievement of greater involvement with author departments and other revenue producing and promotional activities with a view to an expansion and better co-ordination of efforts towards promoting and publicizing the works of the United Nations.

44.29 As part of its mandate, the Publications Board will continue to review and revise, as necessary, policies governing the preparation, production, distribution and sale of United Nations publications. In conjunction with the sales operation, publications with good sales potential will be identified. Based on sales performance and feedback from readership, the sales services will advise author departments on improving the quality of their publications in order to reach as wide a readership as possible and to generate maximum sale of successful titles.

The upgrading and modernization of the bookstores, at Headquarters in a first stage, will aim at attracting more customers among the visitors.

SUBPROGRAMME 4. SERVICES TO VISITORS

(a) Objectives

44.30 The legislative mandate for subprogramme 4 derives from General Assembly resolutions 886 (IX) and 44/50.

44.31 The objective of the subprogramme is to promote an understanding of the Organization's purposes and work to the public, while recovering full costs and also making a profit if possible.

44.32 During the biennium 1988-1989, approximately half a million visitors per year took the guided tours at United Nations Headquarters. At the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna approximately 120,000 and 73,000 visitors, respectively, took the guided tours each year. The tours provide basic information on the aims and activities of the Organization and inform visitors of current issues before the Organization. Experience has shown that it is a useful information tool in that it offers first hand information about the Organization and allows for active question and answer sessions.

44.33 In recent years, the number of visitors taking the tours at Headquarters has increased, which is attributable to the regained popularity of the Organization on the North American continent. It is assumed however that further increases at Headquarters as well as in Geneva and Vienna could be achieved if appropriate solutions were found to the following problems:

(a) Seasonal fluctuations in the number of visitors who take tours and the sometimes inadequate availability of guides and facilities;

(b) The static and out-dated content of terms, without differentiations in terms of age groups or specific interests of the visitors.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

44.34 Since experience has shown that some visitors do not wish to take the entire tour and that Council chambers on the tour route are frequently closed because of meetings, the alternative of utilizing a dedicated area for the presentation of films and videos on the work and priority themes of the Organization will be considered. Such material could be presented on a continuous basis and would be interpreted into various languages.

44.35 In order to make the tours more appealing to visitors, they will be tailored according to the audience. A children's tour is currently being planned at Headquarters. Subsequently, other special interest tours might include such topics as the art and architecture of United Nations Headquarters.